

THE RESTORATION,
RENOVATION *and*
REMODELING SERIES

*The classic work of
William Park “Billy” Bell
and the more recent
of his son, William F. Bell*



(Above) Arizona Biltmore
Resort Adobe Course in Phoenix

(Right) An early ad for
William P. Bell

WILLIAM P. BELL AT CASTLEWOOD

Courses Under Construction:	Courses Being Designed:
El Caballero Country Club	Castlewood Country Club
La Cumbre Country Club	Rolling Hills Golf Club
San Pedro Golf Club	Chevy Chase Golf Club
Long Beach Municipal	Santa Susana Country Club
Girard Country Club	
Bel-Air Golf Club	

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WILLIAM P. BELL
Golf Architect

MANAGER GOLF DEPARTMENT
PACIFIC PROPERTIES CORPORATION
Pacific Properties Building - Pasadena, California

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Throughout our various departments we are Equipped to Design and Construct Golf Courses, Buildings and Water Systems.

Born in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, William Park “Billy” Bell was often described as quiet, pleasant and unassuming. Growing up working the fields of eastern Pennsylvania, Bell gained valuable knowledge of soils, drainage and plants. He studied agriculture in Pittsburgh before moving to California in 1911.

Upon his arrival on the west coast, Bell took the job of caddie master at Annandale Country Club in Pasadena, California, eventually rising to supervise maintenance and remodeling of the course by golf architect William “Willie” Watson. Bell continued to work for Watson as the construction superintendent at several new courses in Southern California before setting out on his own in 1920.

Bell traveled back to Pennsylvania in 1922 to study many of the great classics such as Oakmont, Merion and Pine Valley. Once back in California, his knowledge of both the design and maintenance sides of a golf course led to increased business and a fruitful partnership with renowned golf architect, Captain George C. Thomas. Thomas was also an author, writing several books on rose breeding and one of the great early books on golf course design, *Golf Architecture in America, Its Strategy and Construction*. Bell, who was an accomplished artist, was responsible for the illustrations used in the book.

Often called “the bunker man” for the unique and majestic bunkers he crafted with Thomas, Bell showcased his own talents by cleverly engineering and constructing their world class golf courses on difficult sites.

(continued)



The collaboration between Thomas and Bell produced some of the U.S.'s most illustrious golf courses, including Ojai Valley Inn, Bel-Air, Riviera, and the redesign of the North Course at Los Angeles C.C.

Bell went on to design many great golf courses on his own, including Stanford University Golf Course, San Diego, La Jolla, and Tijuana Country Clubs.

Following the Great Depression Bell teamed with a new design partner; famed golf course architect A.W. Tillinghast. Together, they oversaw the rebuilding of a number of Southern California courses that had been damaged or destroyed by the barrage of flooding in the winter of 1938.

Following the war, with Tillinghast retired, Bell continued to design courses throughout the West. Initially, the majority of his efforts were directed at rebuilding and redesigning courses that had been left unmaintained for years because of economic hard times and war. In 1948 his son, William Francis Bell — often called “Billy Bell, Jr.” — graduated from the University of Southern California and joined his father in the design business.

Together, the Bells dominated the golf course building and remodeling market in the Western United States and Hawaii. The elder Bell, along with the likes of Donald Ross, Robert Trent Jones, Sr., and Perry Maxwell, was a founding member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, serving as president in 1952. Just a short time later, in October of 1953, William P. Bell suffered a heart attack and passed away at the age of 67. He died in Pasadena, the same town where he had begun his career in golf. Following his father's death, the younger Bell continued the successful golf course architecture practice and retained the company name of “William P. Bell and Son” in his father's honor.

William F. Bell went on to become an extremely prolific golf course designer during the 1950s, 60s and 70s. He designed and remodeled more than 200 golf courses during his career and, like his father, completed the majority of his work in the Western United States.

Although the design aesthetic of golf courses built after World War II had changed significantly from the “Golden Age of Design” during which his father worked,

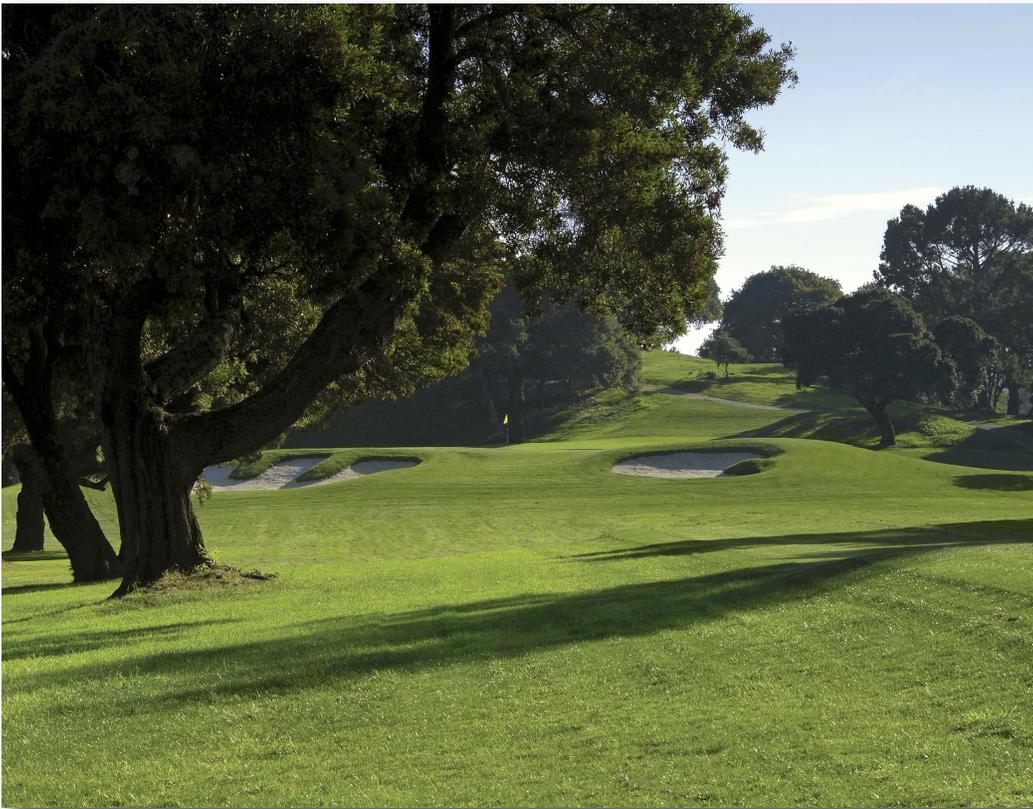
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(Above) Peacock Gap Golf Club in San Rafael, California, restored and rebuilt by Forrest Richardson & Associates in 2008

NOTABLE BELL PROJECTS BY FORREST RICHARDSON & ASSOC:

- Buenaventura (California)
- Olivas Links (California)
- Arizona Biltmore Adobe (Arizona)
- Peacock Gap (California)
- Alameda Municipal (Master Plan, California)
- Papago Park (Master Plan, Arizona)



(Above and below) Peacock Gap Golf Club in San Rafael, California, restored and rebuilt by Forrest Richardson & Associates in 2008



- He liked laced edge bunkers, placing them with strategy and temptation
- At times he would leave islands amid his large bunkers
- His large, multi-bayed bunkers often flowed away from greens, creating a look as if the entire area had been carved from one landform
- He favored rolling and undulated green surfaces that were strategically linked to pin locations on the green
- He designed his approaches to enable a golfer to work the ball onto the green

For more than 60 years the Bells showcased ingenuity and innovation in the field of golf course design. Their legacy lives on at golf courses throughout the Western United States. Their courses cover the gamut including resorts, daily-fee public facilities, private clubs, intimate executive layouts, and major championship venues. The features that the Bells so creatively incorporated into their designs are integral to the challenge and enjoyment of their golf courses for all types of golfers.

Unfortunately, because of the always evolving face of a golf course, many features can be lost or compromised over time. Issues including safety, tree growth, bunker deterioration, turf conditions and circulation are just a few of the areas that must be considered when addressing past and future changes.

Hallmarks of courses by William P. Bell, from the book, Bunkers, Pits & Other Hazards by Forrest Richardson & Mark K. Fine

The nuances of working with older golf courses are more complex than they often appear, particularly when attempting to utilize modern practices on older designs while understanding the important historical context of the work.

To guarantee the best results it is essential that expertise, experience and a thorough understanding of the process are brought to the table. The golf course is, after all, an investment — when the work is finished, the restoration and renovation effort should have made it more valuable.

Forrest Richardson & Assoc. has worked on more than 25 Bell courses and has a strong standing as a leader among golf course design firms specializing in renovation, restoration and remodeling. The firm has been honored for their work, receiving nominations for the Best New Affordable Course (Golf Digest), a Silver Award – Resort Properties (Golf Digest), Environmental Excellence Awards, and multiple Development and Renovation of the Year Awards from Golf Inc.

Additionally, we are extensively involved in consulting and master planning projects that help ensure the success and future viability of golf facilities.

Over the past decade, Forrest Richardson has attained a personal reputation for his appreciation and study of the Bells' designs. Richardson's mentor, the late golf course architect Arthur Jack Snyder, worked with Wm. F. Bell, directing construction of the popular Papago Golf Course in Phoenix, Arizona.

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the distinguishable features employed by his father were often integrated to William F. Bell's designs. At Bermuda Dunes C.C., Papago Golf Course, Sandpiper Golf Course, and the two courses at Industry Hills, Bell demonstrated an ability to create lasting designs that have challenged generations of golfers.

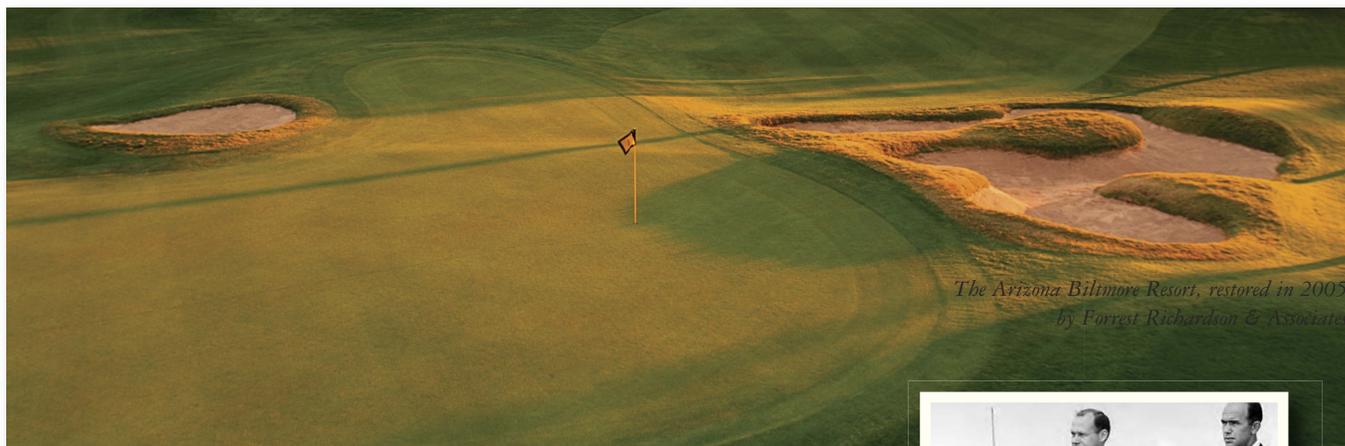
However, it is Torrey Pines, site of the 2008 U.S. Open, that accounts for the younger Bell's most recognizable design. Preliminary work on the design of Torrey Pines had been started by his father, but it was Bell "Jr." who brought the final design of both the North and South courses to fruition.

Like his father, Bell was a member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. In 1957 he served the society as its president, the youngest to serve in that capacity at the time.

William F. Bell passed away in 1984, from a heart attack in Pasadena, just as his father had 30 years before.

Torrey Pines was selected by the U.S.G.A. as the site of the 2008 United States Open. Forrest Richardson & Associates, in conjunction with the National Golf Foundation were primary consultants to the City of San Diego in reviewing plans and impacts of the 2008 U.S. Open, and to generally consult on the City's golf assets. As part of this work, our office developed conceptual plans for renovating and improving the Balboa Park Golf Courses, created by the senior Bell as one of his most innovative (and earliest) California designs.

(Below) The "Scotch & Soda" Bunker at the Arizona Biltmore Adobe Course, a 1928 William P. Bell design restored in 2005 by Forrest Richardson & Associates



The Arizona Biltmore Resort, restored in 2005 by Forrest Richardson & Associates



William Park Bell



William Francis Bell

(Right) One of the last known photos of William P. Bell (center), taken at the site of the Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course, now home to Baylands Golf Links, a Forrest Richardson design completed in 2018



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